

PD POETRY

JANUARY 2018



"Abandoned Farm in the Dustbowl, Coldwater District, near Dalhart, Texas, June" by Dorothea Lange (American, 1895–1965), Library of Congress via The Metropolitan Museum of Art is licensed under CC0 1.0

NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

by George Arnold

IA's etext of *The Poems Of George Arnold, Complete Edition* (1880)

With a bottle and a friend

— Friend is Tom and bottle sherry-
I shall now begin and end
This brief space where two years blend,
Wondrous wise and merry.

Never yet was there a woe

That had not a pleasure pressing
Close upon its heels ; and so
Through the Old and New we go.
Each at some time blessing.

Though the Old Year brought to me
Little joy and much of sorrow,

In the New I hope to be

Happier: my joys, you see.
Always come — to-morrow.

So, as New- Year's Eve doth end,

Tom, and I, and golden sherry
— Finest wine and oldest friend —
Kill the space where two years blend.

Making wondrous merry.

AN OLD MAN'S WINTER NIGHT

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Mountain Interval*, by Robert Frost

All out of doors looked darkly in at him
Through the thin frost, almost in separate stars,
That gathers on the pane in empty rooms.
What kept his eyes from giving back the gaze
Was the lamp tilted near them in his hand.
What kept him from remembering what it was
That brought him to that creaking room was age.
He stood with barrels round him--at a loss.
And having scared the cellar under him
In clomping there, he scared it once again
In clomping off;--and scared the outer night,
Which has its sounds, familiar, like the roar
Of trees and crack of branches, common things,
But nothing so like beating on a box.
A light he was to no one but himself
Where now he sat, concerned with he knew what,
A quiet light, and then not even that.
He consigned to the moon, such as she was,
So late-arising, to the broken moon
As better than the sun in any case
For such a charge, his snow upon the roof,
His icicles along the wall to keep;
And slept. The log that shifted with a jolt
Once in the stove, disturbed him and he shifted,
And eased his heavy breathing, but still slept.
One aged man--one man--can't fill a house,
A farm, a countryside, or if he can,
It's thus he does it of a winter night.

WANTING IS—WHAT?

Project Gutenberg's *Pomegranates from an English Garden*, by Robert Browning

Wanting is—what?
Summer redundant,
Blueness abundant,
—Where is the spot?
Beamy the world, yet a blank all the same,
—Framework which waits for a picture to frame:
What of the leafage, what of the flower?
Roses embowering with nought they embower!
Come then, complete incompleteness, O come,
Pant through the blueness, perfect the Summer!
Breathe but one breath
Rose-beauty above,
And all that was death
Grows life, grows love,
Grows love!

DESERT POOLS

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Rivers to the Sea*, by Sara Teasdale

I LOVE too much; I am a river
 Surging with spring that seeks the sea,
I am too generous a giver,

 Love will not stoop to drink of me.

His feet will turn to desert places
 Shadowless, reft of rain and dew,
Where stars stare down with sharpened faces
 From heavens pitilessly blue.

And there at midnight sick with faring,
 He will stoop down in his desire
To slake the thirst grown past all bearing
 In stagnant water keen as fire.

SOWING

Project Gutenberg's *Poems and Parodies*, by Tom Kettle
(WRITTEN IN 1899)

One mocked: "Thy brain is mad with wine;
The fairies spin the threads of night,
And pour their vials of sour blight
About the roots of health, yet thine
And thou, ye garner into verse
Bright flowers to trick a solemn hearse:
The cowslip, maiden-love of spring,
The burning incense of the rose,
The austere lily, her that blows
By winter's marge--each gracious thing
Past or unborn. Weak, trusting fool!
Old Time shall file thee in his school."

"I know not Time, his last or first;
With master hands I despoil all
His hoarded sweetness and his gall.
I crush the aeons for my thirst,
And so am mad. Pencils of fire
Limn visions of soul-large desire.

In Faith I cast on frozen ground
An obscure life of sweat and tears;
In the far Autumn of the years
Men reap full harvests, springing round,
And judge them gifts of kindly chance,
My deed laughs through each mellow lance."

COLD BRANCH IN THE BLACK AIR

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Shepherd Singing Ragtime and Other Poems*, by Louis Golding

Who taps? You are not the wind tapping?

 No! Not the wind!

You straining and moaning there,

Are you a cold branch in the black air

 Which the storm has skinned?

 _No! Not a cold branch!

 Not the wind!_

Who are you? Who are you?

 But you loved me once,

 You drank me like wine.

The dead wood simmers in my skull. I am rotten.

And your blood is red still and you have forgotten,

 And my blood was yours once and yours mine!

Are you there still? O fainter, O further.... nothing!

 Nothing taps!

Surely you straining and moaning there,

You were only a cold branch in the black air?

 ... Or a door perhaps?

AT SAGAMORE HILL

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Starved Rock*, by Edgar Lee Masters

All things proceed as though the stage were set
For acts arranged. I have not learned the part,
The day enacts itself. I take the tube,
Find daylight at Jamaica, know the place
Through some rehearsal, all the country know
Which glides along the window, is not seen
For definite memory. At Oyster Bay
A taxi stands in readiness; in a trice
We circle strips of water, slopes of hills,
Climb where a granite wall supports a hill,
A mass of blossoms, ripening berries, too,
And enter at a gate, go up a drive,
Shadowed by larches, cedars, silver willows.
This taxi just ahead is in the play,
Is here in life as I had seen it in
The crystal of prevision, reaches first
The porte cochere. This moment from the door
Comes Roosevelt, and greets the man who leaves
The taxi just ahead, then waits for me,
Puts a strong hand that softens into mine,
And says, O, this is bully!

We go in.

He leaves my antecessor in a room
Somewhere along the hall, and comes to me
Who wait him in the roomy library.
How are those lovely daughters? Oh, by George!
I thought I might forget their names, I know--
It's Madeline and Marcia. Yes, you know
Corinne adores the picture which you sent
Of Madeline--your boy, too? In the war!
That's bully--tea is coming--we must talk,
I have five hundred things to ask you--set
The tea things on this table, Anna--now,
Do you take sugar, lemon? O, you smoke!
I'll give you a cigar.

The talk begins.

He's dressed in canvas khaki, flannel shirt,
Laced boots for farming, chopping trees, perhaps;
A stocky frame, curtains of skin on cheeks
Drained slightly of their fat; gash in the neck
Where pus was emptied lately; one eye dim,
And growing dimmer; almost blind in that.

And when he walks he rolls a little like
A man whose youth is fading, like a cart
That rolls when springs are old. He is a moose,
Scarred, battered from the hunters, thickets, stones;
Some finest tips of antlers broken off,
And eyes where images of ancient things
Flit back and forth across them, keeping still
A certain slumberous indifference
Or wisdom, it may be.

But then the talk!
Bronze dolphins in a fountain cannot spout
More streams at once: Of course the war, the emperor,
America in the war, his sons in France,
The dangers, separation, let them go!
The fate has been appointed--to our task,
Live full our lives with duty, go to sleep!
For I say, he exclaims, the man who fears
To die should not be born, nor left to live.
It's Celtic poetry, free verse. He says:
You nobly celebrate in your Spoon River
The pioneers, the soldiers of the past,
Why do you flout our Philippine adventure?
No difference, Colonel, in the stock, the difference
Lies in the causes. Well, another stream:
Mark Hanna, Quay and others, what I hate,
He says to me, is the Pharisee--I can stand
All other men. And you will find the men
So much maligned had gentle qualities,
And noble dreams. Poor Quay, he loved the Indians,
Sent for me when he lay there dying, said,
Look after such a tribe when I am dead.
I want to crawl upon a sunny rock
And die there like a wolf. Did he say that,
Colonel, to you? Yes! and you know, a man
Who says a thing like that has in his soul
An orb of light to flash that meaning forth
Of heroism, nature.

Time goes on,
The play is staged, must end; my taxi comes
In half an hour or so. Before it comes,
Let's walk about the farm and see my corn.
A fellow on the porch is warming heels
As we go by. I'll see him when you go,
The Colonel says.

The rail fence by the corn

Is good to lean on as we stand and talk
Of farming, cattle, country life. We turn,
Sit for some moments in a garden house
On which a rose vine clammers all in bloom,
And from this hilly place look at the strips
Of water from the bay a mile beyond,
Below some several terraces of hills
Where firs and pines are growing. This resembles
A scene in Milton that I've read. He knows,
Catches the reminiscence, quotes the lines--and then
Something of country silence, look of grass
Where the wind stirs it, mystical little breaths
Coming between the roses; something, too,
In Vulcan's figure; he is Vulcan, too,
Deprived his shop, great bellows, hammer, anvil,
Sitting so quietly beside me, hands
Spread over knees; something of these evokes
A pathos, and immediately in key
With all of this he says: I have achieved
By labor, concentration, not at all
By gifts or genius, being commonplace
In all my faculties.

Not all, I say.

One faculty is not, your over-mind,
Eyed front and back to see all faculties,
Govern and watch them. If we let you state
Your case against you, timid born, you say,
Becoming brave, asthmatic, growing strong:
No marksman, yet becoming skilled with guns;
No gift of speech, yet winning golden speech;
No gift of writing, writing books, no less
Of our America to thrill and live--
If, as I say, we let you state your case
Against you as you do, there yet remains
This over-mind, and that is what--a gift
Of genius or of what? By George, he says,
What are you, a theosophist? I don't know.
I know some men achieve a single thing,
Like courage, charity, in this incarnation;
You have achieved some twenty things. I think
That this is going some for a man whose gifts
Are commonplace and nothing else.

We rise

And saunter toward the house--and there's the man
Still warming heels; my taxi, too, has come.
We are to meet next Wednesday in New York

And finish up some subjects--he has thoughts
How I can help America, if I drop
This line or that a little, all in all.

* * * * *

But something happens; I have met a loss;
Would see no one, and write him I am off.
And on that Wednesday flashes from the war
Say Quentin has been killed: we had not met
If I had stayed to meet him.

So, good-by

Upon the lawn at Sagamore was good-by,
Master of Properties, you stage the scene
And let us speak and pass into the wings!
One thing was fitting--dying in your sleep--
A touch of Nature, Colonel, you who loved
And were beloved of Nature, felt her hand
Upon your brow at last to give to you
A bit of sleep, and after sleep perhaps
Rest and rejuvenation; you will wake
To newer labors, fresher victories
Over those faculties not disciplined
As you desired them in these sixty years.

LOVE'S KISS

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Some Verses*, by Helen Hay

Kiss me but once--and in that space supreme
My whole dark life shall quiver to an end,
Sweet Death shall see my heart and comprehend
That life is crowned--and in an endless gleam
Will fix the colour of the dying stream
That Life and Death may meet as friend with friend
An endless immortality to blend;
Kiss me but once, and so shall end my dream.
And then Love heard me and bestowed his kiss,
And straight I cried to Death: I will not die!
Earth is so fair when one remembers this;
Life is but just begun! Ah, come not yet!
The very world smiles up to kiss the sky
And in the grave one may forget--forget.

AFTER THE WINTER

by Claude McKay, from the Internet Archive etext of *Harlem Shadows*

Some day, when trees have shed their leaves
And against the morning's white
The shivering birds beneath the eaves
Have sheltered for the night,
We'll turn our faces southward, love,
Toward the summer isle
Where bamboos spire to shafted grove
And wide-mouthed orchids smile.

And we will seek the quiet hill
Where towers the cotton tree,
And leaps the laughing crystal rill,
And works the droning bee.
And we will build a cottage there
Beside an open glade,
With black-ribbed blue-bells blowing near,
And ferns that never fade.

WINTER DESIRES

by Maurice Maeterlinck

The Project Gutenberg eBook, *Contemporary Belgian Poetry*, by Various

I weep for lips whose brief
 Red no kisses hath known,
 And for longing left to moan
In a reaped, rich harvest of grief.

The rain must pour and pour!
 Or the snow is thick on the sward,
 While crouching wolves do ward
My threshold of dreams evermore,

And watch in my soul ever sighing,
 With eyes in the past nigh dead,
 All the blood that of old was shed
Of lambs on the hard ice dying.

Only the moon with its chill,
 Monotonous sadness lights,
 While autumn the thin grass blights,
My longing with hunger ill.

A WINTER RIDE

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *A Dome of Many-Coloured Glass*, by Amy Lowell

Who shall declare the joy of the running!

Who shall tell of the pleasures of flight!

Springing and spurning the tufts of wild heather,

Sweeping, wide-winged, through the blue dome of light.

Everything mortal has moments immortal,

Swift and God-gifted, immeasurably bright.

So with the stretch of the white road before me,

Shining snowcrystals rainbowed by the sun,

Fields that are white, stained with long, cool, blue shadows,

Strong with the strength of my horse as we run.

Joy in the touch of the wind and the sunlight!

Joy! With the vigorous earth I am one.

WINTER BOUGHS

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Happy Ending*, by Louise Imogen Guiney

HOW tender and how slow, in sunset cheer,
Far on the hill, our quiet treetops fade!
A broidery of ebon seaweed, laid
Long in a book, were scarce more fine and clear.
Frost and sad light and windless atmosphere
Have breathed on them, and of their frailties made
Beauty more sweet than summer's builded shade,
Whose green domes fallen, leave this wonder here.

O ye forgetting and outliving boughs,
With not a plume, gay in the joust before,
Left for the Archer! so, in evening's eye,
So stilled, so lifted, let your lover die,
Set in the upper calm no voices rouse,
Stript, meek, withdrawn, against the heavenly door.

O ME! O LIFE!

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Leaves of Grass*, by Walt Whitman

O me! O life! of the questions of these recurring,
Of the endless trains of the faithless, of cities fill'd with the foolish,
Of myself forever reproaching myself, (for who more foolish than I,
and who more faithless?)
Of eyes that vainly crave the light, of the objects mean, of the
struggle ever renew'd,
Of the poor results of all, of the plodding and sordid crowds I see
around me,
Of the empty and useless years of the rest, with the rest me intertwined,
The question, O me! so sad, recurring--What good amid these, O me, O
life?

Answer.

That you are here--that life exists and identity,
That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse.

TO SOME LADIES

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Poems 1817*, by John Keats

What though while the wonders of nature exploring,
I cannot your light, mazy footsteps attend;
Nor listen to accents, that almost adoring,
Bless Cynthia's face, the enthusiast's friend:

Yet over the steep, whence the mountain stream rushes,
With you, kindest friends, in idea I rove;
Mark the clear tumbling crystal, its passionate gushes,
Its spray that the wild flower kindly bedews.

Why linger you so, the wild labyrinth strolling?
Why breathless, unable your bliss to declare?
Ah! you list to the nightingale's tender condoling,
Responsive to sylphs, in the moon beamy air.

'Tis morn, and the flowers with dew are yet drooping,
I see you are treading the verge of the sea:
And now! ah, I see it--you just now are stooping
To pick up the keep-sake intended for me.

If a cherub, on pinions of silver descending,
Had brought me a gem from the fret-work of heaven;
And smiles, with his star-cheering voice sweetly blending,
The blessings of Tighe had melodiously given;

It had not created a warmer emotion
Than the present, fair nymphs, I was blest with from you,
Than the shell, from the bright golden sands of the ocean
Which the emerald waves at your feet gladly threw.

For, indeed, 'tis a sweet and peculiar pleasure,
(And blissful is he who such happiness finds,)
To possess but a span of the hour of leisure,
In elegant, pure, and aerial minds.

THE OLD CLOCK ON THE STAIRS

_H.W. Longfellow

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Poems Teachers Ask For*, by Various

Somewhat back from the village street
Stands the old-fashioned country-seat;
Across its antique portico
Tall poplar trees their shadows throw;
And, from its station in the hall,
An ancient timepiece says to all,
 "Forever--never!
 Never--forever!"

Half-way up the stairs it stands,
And points and beckons with its hands,
From its case of massive oak,
Like a monk who, under his cloak,
Crosses himself, and sighs, alas!
With sorrowful voice to all who pass,
 "Forever--never!
 Never--forever!"

By day its voice is low and light;
But in the silent dead of night,
Distinct as a passing footstep's fall,
It echoes along the vacant hall,
Along the ceiling, along the floor,
And seems to say at each chamber door,
 "Forever--never!
 Never--forever!"

Through days of sorrow and of mirth,
Through days of death and days of birth,
Through every swift vicissitude
Of changeful time, unchanged it has stood,
And as if, like God, it all things saw,
It calmly repeats those words of awe,
 "Forever--never!
 Never--forever!"

In that mansion used to be
Free-hearted Hospitality;
His great fires up the chimney roared;
The stranger feasted at his board;
But, like the skeleton at the feast,
That warning timepiece never ceased,--

"Forever--never!
Never--forever!"

There groups of merry children played;
There youths and maidens dreaming strayed;
Oh, precious hours! oh, golden prime
And affluence of love and time!
Even as a miser counts his gold,
Those hours the ancient timepiece told,--

"Forever--never!
Never--forever!"

From that chamber, clothed in white,
The bride came forth on her wedding night;
There, in that silent room below,
The dead lay, in his shroud of snow;
And, in the hush that followed the prayer,
Was heard the old clock on the stair,--

"Forever--never!
Never--forever!"

All are scattered, now, and fled,--
Some are married, some are dead;
And when I ask, with throbs of pain,
"Ah! when shall they all meet again?"
As in the days long since gone by,
The ancient timepiece makes reply,--

"Forever--never!
Never-forever!"

Never here, forever there,
Where all parting, pain, and care,
And death, and time, shall disappear,--
Forever there, but never here!

The horologe of Eternity
Sayeth this incessantly,--

"Forever--never!
Never--forever!"

CARRYING COALS

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Songs of the Sea and Lays of the Land*, by
Charles Godfrey Leland

In the gloomsome abysses where darkness is kept,
And the spirit of silence for ages has slept,
 In the great shaft of Pottsville, way down in the hole,
 There came seven parties, all dealers in coal;
But they never had been in that chasm before,
Nor had the sensation of darkness all o'er,
 Which so greatly expandeth the soul.

And one of 'em said, "It's an awful delight
To be infinite deep into no end of night,
 Where the heavenly sunshine can't manage to spring,—
 And, talking of that, I've a notion, by Jing!
Let we ourselves mine out some coal lumps to-day
To show to the folks,—which I think, by the way,
 Would be a poetical thing."

So they filled up their pockets, untried by a doubt,
And in the hotel they unveiled 'em all out;
 But their glances grew strange as they turned o'er the weight,
 Till one of them shouted, "By thunder, it's slate!"
Yet the youngest among them had dealered in coal,
And unto that traffic surrendered his soul,
 Since the Anno Eighteen Forty-eight.

For all of man's wisdom is only a dream,
Which passeth away like a plate of ice-cream,
 And the best of experience fails, as we mark,
 If you go for to dig when you're all in the dark;
For there's always a moral inside of a tale,
And big things in little things always prevail
 As sure as there's wood in the bark.

ODE ON SOLITUDE._

by Alexander Pope

The Project Gutenberg eBook, *The Hundred Best English Poems*, by Various

Happy the man, whose wish and care
A few paternal acres bound,
Content to breathe his native air,
In his own ground.

Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,
Whose flocks supply him with attire,
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,
In winter fire.

Blest, who can unconcern'dly find
Hours, days, and years slide soft away,
In health of body, peace of mind,
Quiet by day.

Sound sleep by night; study and ease,
Together mix'd; sweet recreation;
And innocence, which most does please
With meditation.

Thus let me live, unseen, unknown,
Thus unlamented let me die,
Steal from the world, and not a stone
Tell where I lie.



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